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UNCLAS YEREVAN 001369

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: REACTION FROM YEREVAN, ARMENIA: PRESS
CONFERENCE OF AMBASSADOR JOHN ORDWAY

1. SUMMARY: All mass media widely covered Ambassador John Ordway's press conference held on June 17. Almost all TV and newspaper reports were accurate and factual. The majority of the newspapers quoted the Ambassador without any comments. All the newspapers noted that there will be the final press conference before the Ambassador's departure to Kazakhstan, so the journalists expect a kind of wrap up of the Ambassador's activities in Armenia at the last press conference. The main topics discussed this time were resolution of the Karabakh conflict, efficiency of the Minsk group activities, the internal political situation in the country, the upcoming NATO (PfP) exercise in Azerbaijan, as well as other issues. The following is a summary of some of the articles. END SUMMARY

U.S. DOES NOT SPONSOR POLITICAL PARTIES

2. Newspaper of the "Constitutional Right" Union IRUVUNK (06/18) wrote a short report with the conclusion: "Despite his intention not to assess Armenia's internal political situation, the Ambassador said that they are glad that the recent rallies were peaceful and only a few people were detained for their political views."

U.S. IS STRONGLY AGAINST RESOLUTION BY FORCE. IT WILL SUPPORT PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT

3. Pro-governmental HAYOTS ASHKHAR (06/18) gave a balanced coverage of the press conference. "The Ambassador was asked whether the U.S. supports step-by-step or package resolution of the Karabakh conflict. The Ambassador's answer was more than diplomatic and a little bit unexpected for those who wanted to hear that the only way to resolve the conflict is the package approach. The Ambassador said that they would support any version, which would allow the parties to reach an agreement and establish lasting peace and stability in the region."

ORDWAY'S NEXT TO LAST PRESS CONFERENCE

4. Oppositionist Armenian daily HAYKAKAN ZHAMANAK (06/18) started its article with humor regarding Ambassador Ordway's departure to Kazakhstan. "Now nothing threatens the departure of Ambassador Ordway to Kazakhstan, since during yesterday's press conference the Ambassador did not make any predictions regarding the presidential election in the United States, as it could have deprived him of his diplomatic status."

ORDWAY DOES NOT HURRY TO SUM UP

5. Russian language independent newspaper NOVOYE VREMYA (06/19) published an article discussing the recent press conferences and different statements made by Ambassador Ordway. "The monthly press conferences by John Ordway, in spite of their protocol character, give reason to assume that the Ambassador is deeply familiar with the different processes taking place in our country. His balanced and adequate assessments witness that the Ambassador wants to leave good memories after him. At least he has not made the kind of statements for which the British Ambassador became famous." Ordway likewise avoided bows addressed to either the authorities or the opposition."

ORDWAY